



Urban Research Centers

WHAT IS AN URBAN RESEARCH CENTER (URC)?

A URC is a partnership of representatives of community-based organizations, universities, government, and other key stakeholders in the health and well-being of low-income urban populations. As full partners in all phases of planning and research, community representatives have a voice and a vote in decisions about how to promote health and reduce risks for disease in their own communities.

WHAT DO THE URCs DO?

Each URC partnership systematically reviews local needs, assets, and opportunities to effect sustainable health improvements. Resources, such as the *Guide to Clinical Preventive Services* and the *Guide for Community Prevention Services*, assist the partnerships in priority-setting and intervention planning, by providing evidence-based information on intervention strategies that work and provide the best value.

Using an approach called “community-based participatory research,” URC partners *share* the risks, rewards, and responsibilities of research planning, capacity building, design, implementation, evaluation, and translation of findings into sustainable programs and policies.

WHAT HAVE THE URCs ACCOMPLISHED?

Since the program was created in 1995, the URCs have

- designed and implemented community-based interventions in HIV, diabetes, asthma, interpersonal violence, and access to quality health care;
- developed resource guides, technical assistance centers, and “tools you can use”;
- successfully competed for \$43M in extramural research support;
- published 70 articles in peer-referreed journals;
- conducted a Special Presidential Plenary Session at the APHA Annual Meeting in November, 2002, featuring Dr. David Satcher, former Surgeon General, as keynote speaker and community partners as presenters.

WHERE ARE THE URCs?

URCs in Seattle, Detroit, and New York City have been in operation since 1995. CDC has provided funding to support infrastructure development and research on specific topics. In addition, CDC scientists (“assignees”) have worked on-site at each of the URCs to provide scientific support and to serve as liaison between the URC and CDC.

The **Seattle URC** works in low-income urban communities of Asian, African American, and Caucasian residents. Priority areas include

- prevention and control of asthma;
- social determinants of health, with a focus on community development and social support; and
- protection of community interests in research.

The **Detroit URC** serves predominantly African American and Latino populations in Eastside and Southwest Detroit. Priority health concerns include

- violence prevention;
- indoor/outdoor environmental health problems; and
- access to and quality of health care.

The **New York URC** works with predominantly poor Latino and African American residents of East and Central Harlem, focusing on

- HIV intervention and prevention;
- hepatitis C infection among injecting drug users; and
- transition from non-injecting to injecting drug use.

The **US-Mexico Border URC** will serve predominantly Hispanic population in El Paso-Las Cruces-Ciudad Juárez. Working with staff and partners from Mexico and the U.S., health priorities for the border region's poorest communities will be identified by partners from northern Chihuahua, far west Texas, and southern New Mexico.

URC WEBSITES

Harlem URC Community Action Board
<http://www.nyam.org/divisions/urbanepi/research.shtml>

Seattle Partners for Healthy Communities
<http://depts.washington.edu/hprc/SeattlePartners/index.htm>

Detroit Community-Academic URC
<http://www.sph.umich.edu/urc/index.html>

US-Mexico Border URC
(under construction)

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